

United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1190
24 July 1992

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- + Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, recommends that United Nations role in Somalia be enlarged to help bring about an effective cease-fire and national reconciliation; proposes sending a technical team to examine situation.
- + Special Representative to Cambodia says serious cease-fire violations are continuing, particularly in areas controlled by the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea.
- + Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament says talks are continuing with Permanent Representative of Iraq on "modalities" for inspections of Agriculture Ministry building in Baghdad; Iraqi spokesman calls on Security Council to accept proposal for neutral inspection team.
- + Social Committee of Economic and Social Council recommends that proclamation of International Day of Cooperatives be observed on first Saturday in July 1995.

* * *

Somalia is today a divided country, and the quantity of arms in the hands of individuals, factions and groups is enormous. The complexity of the situation and the inherent dangers of working in Somalia, combined with the almost total absence of central, regional and local government, pose enormous operational difficulties for the United Nations in establishing a large-scale and effective presence, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

His assessment of the Somali situation is contained in a report to the Security Council dated 22 July, in which he suggests that the United Nations adapt its involvement in Somalia. "Its efforts need to be enlarged so that it can help bring about an effective cease-fire throughout the country, while at the same time pressing forward with parallel efforts to promote national reconciliation", he says. This would require, in his opinion, the establishment of a United Nations presence in all regions of the country and the adoption of an innovative and comprehensive approach dealing with all aspects of Somalia's situation, "namely, the humanitarian relief and recovery

(more)

programme, the cessation of hostilities and security, the peace process and national reconciliation, in a consolidated framework".

As far the regions are concerned, the Secretary-General proposes to establish four operational zones: the north-west (Berbera), the north-east (Bossasso), the central rangeland and Mogadishu (Mogadishu), and the South (Kismayao). In each of the zones a consolidated United Nations operation will carry out the primary activities envisaged in Security Council resolution 751 (1992), such as: humanitarian activities, emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, monitoring of the ceasefire, security, demobilization and disarmament, and the peace process through conciliation and good offices.

According to the Secretary-General, looting and banditry remain a widespread problem in the capital city of Mogadishu and attacks on United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel have increased recently. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali discloses that he has asked his Special Representative to pursue his consultations for the deployment of a security force there.

The Secretary-General also says that he intends to dispatch a technical team to Somalia as soon as possible "to examine inter alia: the possible monitoring of ceasefire arrangements in parts of the country other than Mogadishu; the possible deployment of military observers in the southwest region of Somalia's border with Kenya; the feasibility of an "arms for food" exchange programme; the need for security forces to provide escort and protection for humanitarian aid activities, and a possible role for the United Nations in assisting the re-establishment of local police forces".

The desperate and complex situation in Somalia will require energetic and sustained efforts on the part of the international community to break to cycle of violence and hunger, concludes the Secretary-General, before recommending, for the Council's approval, "a comprehensive and enlarged approach" to the Somali situation.

The Secretary-General's report was submitted to the Security Council in conformity with the provisions of Security Council resolution 751 (1992) concerning the situation in Somalia. The Secretary-General will submit a further report to the Council on the implementation of his recommendations, as soon as he receives the conclusions and recommendations of the technical team that he proposes to dispatch to the area.

In a separate development, the Secretary-General, said in a statement issued today that he had been informed that newly printed Somali currency notes, which had been ordered by the old regime, were being introduced into Somalia and circulated in the north of Mogadishu. The decision to introduce the new currency, he said, was contrary to an agreement last week that such circulation would be withheld. He appealed to the parties concerned to avoid introducing a new element of conflict which would only bring about further deterioration in the situation.

(more)

"Given the unstable situation prevailing in Somalia today, and in particular the increasing tension in Mogadishu, the circulation of this currency might become the cause of renewed open hostilities", he said. "In the absence of a national government in control of the entire country or a general understanding among all Somali leaders, it is advisable to refrain from such an initiative."

* * *

Two days after the Security Council demanded, in a unanimous decision, that Democratic Kampuchea (PDK) - one of the four Cambodian factions - allow without delay the deployment of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) into areas under its control, in compliance with the terms of the Paris Peace Agreements, Yasushi Akashi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Cambodia, has indicated that cease-fire violations have continued and have become more serious, particularly in areas controlled by the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea in northern Cambodia.

At a meeting of the Supreme National Council (SNC) chaired by its President, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Mr. Akashi underlined the willingness of UNTAC to meet its obligations under the Paris Agreements. He reaffirmed his commitment to establishing checkpoints along the Cambodian borders and to sending mobile investigation teams whenever necessary. He also told SNC members that the PDK had not participated in Mixed Military Working Group meetings for several weeks, thus compromising its effectiveness.

The meeting also examined questions concerning the verification of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia. Mr. Akashi told the SNC that UNTAC was determined to investigate any allegations regarding the presence of troops, advisers and military personnel.

* * *

Rolf Ekeus, Head of the Special Commission, told the press at Headquarters today that he was continuing his discussions with the Iraqi Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Abd al-Amir Al-Anbari, on "modalities" for continuing the Special Commission's search for material related to Iraq's proscribed weapons programmes. He said that these were not negotiations: "We have no authority to negotiate; the resolutions of the Security Council are binding."

At the press briefing, Ambassador Ekeus said that the Chief Inspector of the inspection team that had been trying, from 5 July until its withdrawal yesterday, to gain access to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in Baghdad, and five members of the team, had been sent to Bahrain to rest. However, there were still 65 Special Commission personnel in Baghdad, including aerial surveillance, chemical destruction team and support staff.

The Iraqi Foreign Ministry, in a statement transmitted by Ambassador Al-Anbari in a letter to the Secretary-General today, said that the decision to withdraw the United Nations inspection team from its 17-day vigil outside

(more)

the Agriculture Ministry "stems from the dilemma in which the Special Commission found itself" after Iraq expressed readiness to have a neutral team inspect the Ministry.

The statement also accused the inspection team of provoking the feelings of Iraqi citizens by taking up position in front of what he called "a symbol of sovereignty of the Iraqi people". It said that the underlying intention of claims about threats to safety of the team was "to create a situation which would enable the influential members of the Security Council harbouring hostility towards Iraq to commit unlawful intervention, to achieve political aims through aggression".

At a press conference in Vienna today, a spokesman for the Iraqi Mission to the United Nations said his country had allowed journalists and foreign diplomats to tour the Agriculture Ministry building. He called on the Security Council to adopt Iraq's proposal to appoint a neutral inspection team as a way out of the impasse: "We believe that the Security Council has the duty to understand the Iraqi position," he said.

* * *

The Social Committee of the Economic and Social Council this morning recommended that the General Assembly proclaim an International Day of Cooperatives to be observed on the first Saturday in July 1995. The observance would mark the centenary of the International Cooperative Alliance, in recognition of the important contribution of cooperatives to social and economic development.

A draft resolution on the subject was approved without a vote by the Committee, along with two drafts on other social issues. According to one of the proposals, the Council would recommend that the Secretary-General convene in 1995 a World Summit for social development with representation at the Head of State or Government level. The other proposal would have the Council recommend that the Assembly extend the operation of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons [1983-1992] beyond the Decade and to rename it the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability.

Also this morning, the Committee continued its debate on problems related to illicit drugs, hearing a number of statements on that question. The representative of the United States, Sharin Tahir-Kheli, pointed out that further progress in drug control had been made in the first part of this year when nine more countries ratified the 1988 Convention against traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. To date, 64 countries have deposited their instruments of ratification with the United Nations.

* * * * *